



CAMPAIGN
FOR THE FARMED
ENVIRONMENT



The Campaign for the Farmed Environment is encouraging farmers and land managers to voluntarily adopt land management practices that will retain and exceed the environmental benefits that used to be provided by set-aside. There is a range of voluntary management measures or ELS options that you can adopt on your farm to benefit the environment, whilst at the same time being agronomically practical.

Name Colin Bower of Geoff Bower Ltd
Region East Midlands
Farm Rufford Stud Farm, Nottinghamshire
Size 262 ha



Background

The farm enterprise is combinable crops on soils that range from bunter sandstone to medium clay loam. The family have farmed at Stud Farm, half of which is set in old historic parkland, since 1967.

Farm rape is crushed on site along with that of other members of Sherwood Produce who are reducing their carbon footprint within their vegetable growing and packing businesses. The crushed products go to both liquid and solid bio-fuels.

What environmental management do you already undertake on your farm?

We are just entering the fifth year of our Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) agreement. Our ELS options include management of woodland edge, 6m margins next to all our dykes which fit nicely with LERAPS and wild bird seed mix.

The wildlife management on the farm is greatly enhanced due to both the family's interest in wildlife and shooting.

How will you be/are you taking part in the Campaign?

We will continue with ELS and are currently strongly considering Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) to give further wildlife benefits to the already abundant habitats on the farm.

We have recorded the voluntary measures that we have in place in addition to the ELS measures such as fallow plot - an area we have set aside for nesting habitat for lapwings that has had a clutch this year.

Will you be using an adviser?

Yes we will be using the services offered by FWAG to help tailor the chosen options to match with the needs of local wildlife along with the knowledge of what does and doesn't work from past experience.

We are in the Sherwood Character Area and options are being looked at to create heath land to fit alongside the commercial operations.

What are the benefits of taking part in the Campaign?

To be involved in the positive management of the farm to conserve wildlife and generate an income stream which runs alongside the commercial food and fuel production aspect of the business.

How does undertaking voluntary management fit in with your farming business?

We have 7km of woodland edge that is buffered through ELS. Wild bird cover managed alongside commercial game cover has proven to have positive benefits for game, precious small bird species and bumble bees. Thought has been given to link the open parkland up to create corridors for wildlife.

What is driving you to take part in the Campaign?

An in house passion for wildlife and a well managed countryside along with better tailored income streams through ELS / HLS options.